

Remarks

Claims 1-14 are pending in this application. Claims 1-5 and 8-12 are withdrawn from consideration by election. Claim 7 is combined with claim 6, and claim 7 is cancelled. Claim 14 is combined with claim 13, and claim 14 is cancelled.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC 103

Claims 6, 13 and 14 are rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Kenner in view of Kawamura.

After having studied this Office Action, as well as the prior art documents cited by the Examiner against the elected claims 6, 7, 13 and 14, we have drafted a set of amended claims containing claims 6 and 13 only.

Claim 6 is a combination of claims 6 and 7 as originally filed.

Claim 13 is based on a combination of claims 13 and 14 as originally filed, as well as a further statement in the original disclosure which can be found in paragraph [0078] (page 25) of the specification.

Claim 6

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the notion set forth in the Office Action that claim 6 is rendered obvious by a combination of Kenner and Kawamura. Kenner discloses an evaporative burner having two heating devices. The first heating device is the high voltage electrode 8 used for igniting the evaporated fuel. The second heating device is the rod-shaped heater plug 6, inserted into the cylindrically shaped vaporizer (evaporative medium). However, Kenner is absolutely silent insofar as monitoring fuel supply is concerned. The same is true of Kawamura. Kawamura shows an arrangement having two heating devices, i.e., ignition plug 10 and the heater 4. Kawamura, insofar as the control or monitoring of the fuel supply is concerned,

clearly states that the signal FS from the fuel supply controlling device 6 has to be checked by the controller 15. As stated in the last paragraph of column 3 of Kawamura, this signal FS indicates that fuel is supplied to the fuel atomizer 3 or the fuel supply is shut off. There is absolutely no indication that the electric power provided or supplied to the heater 4 of the fuel atomizer is to be monitored. Additionally, there is no disclosure that by monitoring this electric power, information relating to the supply of fuel could be obtained. In particular, there is no hint that there is an operative feedback interaction between the evaporation of fuel and the power consumption behavior of the heater 4. Therefore, Kenner and Kawamura do not disclose a system in which, on the basis of the information relating to the power consumption of the second heating device, it can be decided that fuel is supplied to the evaporative medium or that the supply and therefore the evaporation of fuel has stopped. This is an absolutely new and advantageous feature of the system as defined in Claim 6, as first of all in the starting condition of the evaporative burner this allows one to detect the point of time at which fuel has actually been introduced into the evaporative medium and has started evaporating. Additionally, after terminating the operation of the evaporative burner by still monitoring the power consumption of the second heating device, the point of time at which the entire fuel contained in the evaporative medium has evaporated can be detected, so that, for example, additionally the operation of a fan can be terminated.

Claim 13

Kawamura discloses an arrangement in which for burning of deposits the heater associated with the fuel atomizer is operated for burning carbon deposits on the outer and the inner peripheries of the fuel atomizer and in the fuel passages. Amended Claim 13 therefore has been reformulated to point out a particular advantageous point of time at which the system

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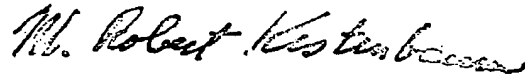
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according to Claim 13 operates the cleaning arrangement. In particular, amended Claim 13 now states that this arrangement is to be operated after the evaporative burner has stopped producing heat, i.e., in a phase following such a heat producing operating condition of the evaporative burner. The particular advantage of such an arrangement is that in this phase, first of all, the oxygen introduced into the evaporative burner is not used for burning evaporated fuel, but can be used for oxidizing and burning-off deposits. The second particular advantage is that in this phase the entire evaporative burner due to the previous heat generating condition thereof is relatively hot and therefore the electric power necessary to bring the cleaning arrangement to the necessary high temperature can be reduced. Kawamura does not disclose that the cleaning arrangement is to be operated in such a condition. Instead, Kawamura clearly discloses two prerequisites that are to be fulfilled for allowing burning off deposits. The first one is that the burner is not operated for generating heat, as is the case with the present invention. The second is that the combustion engine is to be operated with an engine speed of more than 1800 RPM for providing sufficient electric energy. However, Kawamura does not disclose the feature that this cleaning process should be carried out immediately after the burner has stopped generating heat. While obviously this known system needs a rather high engine speed of the combustion engine for providing sufficient electric energy during the cleaning process, and the system as defined in Claim 13 due to burning deposits in a condition in which the entire evaporative burner is very hot, the power consumption and therefore the load on the battery can be substantially reduced. Such a system is also not disclosed or rendered obvious by the cited prior art.

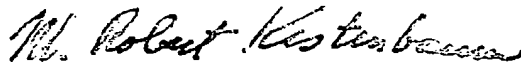
Wherefore further consideration and allowance of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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I hereby certify this correspondence is being submitted to Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231 by facsimile transmission on July 13, 2005, fax number (703) 872-9306.



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